

# Story of a Simple Exercise vs. Leg Pain

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I have been teaching Tai Chi to a class of elderly seniors at a local assisted living center for a few years now. Most of the class members come with a wheelchair or walker. Obviously, it is not feasible to teach them with the traditional Tai Chi routine that requires an ability of walking around. After some discussions, I agreed to offer a tailored routine with low-impact fundamental movements based on Tai Chi as well as meridian principles.

All movements are low-impact in nature and must be executable in a sitting position. In addition, I put emphasis on helping them with inner organ tune up, internal energy balance, coordination improvement, circulation enhancement, and physical relaxation techniques. The goal is aimed at improving their overall well-being. This exercise routine is neither standard nor universal. Its forms are flexible, variable, changeable and reactive to needs and seasonal conditions. I humbly consider it as a Tai Chi Excursion.

If someone would ask me on how to heal a specific ailment, my answer would be, "I have no medical training and am not qualified to provide healing support." But, occasionally, I do offer options that might be worthwhile to try.

One such case happened with polio survivor Ms. Mary Pat Troups. She had been suffering from a leg muscle pain for a few decades. Her question to me was: is there any exercise that might relax the leg pain?

Yes, there is one option I told her. Try an extremely simple knee exercise. The highlights are:

- Take a casual sitting position,
- Keep two feet flat on the floor,
- Shake (swing) two knees sideways back and forth, i.e., move two knees toward each other and then away from each other. Do it with a proper frequency ~ approximately three round-trip swings per second.

Distance of the swing is roughly one inch. (Numbers need not be strict).

How often should one perform this exercise? Arbitrary. Preferably one term for some minutes in the morning and another one term in the evening. Again, no strict requirement.

Possible effect: the action of knee swing causes the leg muscles to flop, in the upper leg as well as the lower leg. And flopping muscles would activate the energy flows in the leg meridians with increased effectiveness; thereby could improve circulation within the entire leg system.

Background of this exercise: it's one of my warm-up movements prior to my formal Tai Chi routine practice.

The exercise itself has no specific name.

Mary tried this exercise for about two weeks. She came back to class telling me that her leg pain disappeared. She kept on doing it daily for about two months now and her pain never returned. Surely I was pleasantly surprised about the result. But I humbly admit that I had no preconceived notion about her story. So, I told her: "Your experience is remarkable, it's good for you. You are just lucky and unique. I hope it would continue to help you consistently."

Later Mary asked me if I'd write an article about it. I told her it might not be worth it. First, I do not believe the exercise could be generalized. Secondly, I expect it to be non-reproducible. Thirdly, it could not be considered as scientific. Overall I lack justification to promote it.

On the other hand, Mary seemed somehow quite motivated to take an action on her own and reported her story. Joan L. Headley asked me to write a short note about the exercise, and I offered a short video showing the "leg muscle flopping exercise."

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dy9iwR8-J\\_0&feature=youtu.be](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dy9iwR8-J_0&feature=youtu.be)